

MR. ZOUBEK'S NOTE:

IN HIS OPEN LETTER "HOW TO DEAL WITH THE LIES AND THE LYING LIARS WHEN THEY LIE ABOUT BOWLING FOR COLUMBINE," MICHAEL MOORE POINTS TO THIS SPECIFIC ARTICLE AS EVIDENCE THAT THE LOCKHEED MARTIN PLANT IN LITTLETON, COLORADO MAKES WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION.

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HEADLINE: U.S. chief executives, Pentagon brass fail to make Paris show

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BODY:

U.S. aerospace chief executives and military brass are missing from this year's Paris Air Show, the industry's biennial showcase, as the Pentagon shows its displeasure over a lack of French government support for the Iraq war.

Lockheed Martin CEO Vance Coffman and Northrop Grumman CEO Ron Sugar last week abruptly dropped plans to attend the world's biggest air show, which opened Saturday. Boeing Chief Executive Phil Condit hadn't even scheduled a visit.

The Defense Department is not allowing U.S. combat planes to perform their aerial acrobatics in Paris, though aircraft are parked along the tarmac on display. It also isn't sending any officer above the rank of colonel to the event.

"It may be that they're doing it to show France what they think about its position in the Iraqi war, but I find it incomprehensible," said Dan Solon, an analyst at London-based consultancy Avmark International. "The Pentagon is shooting itself in the foot."

Attending the world famous event "isn't to schmooze the host," Solon said. "Whether you like the French or not, if the commander and chief of, let's say, the Malaysian Air Force, happens to be at the show and you're a senior officer, you want to say to him, 'We've got a great airplane flying, and how do you like it?'"

Lockheed's Coffman "had a scheduling issue," said Meghan Mariman, a spokeswoman for the world's biggest weapons maker. "He has not been under pressure from the administration," she said.

Northrop Grumman's Sugar backed out because "there just wasn't enough government officials or other CEOs going" to justify the trip, said Rachel Winks, a spokeswoman for the world's No. 3 weapons

maker.

When asked during a press conference why CEO Condit wasn't attending the show, Alan Mulally, head of the world's largest planemaker's commercial aircraft business, said: "Is Phil not here?"

"These are really tough times and people are being so careful with discretionary spending," he added.

The Pentagon declined to say why the U.S. military presence is muted this year.

General Dynamics Corp.'s Gulfstream unit and Textron Inc.'s Cessna and Bell divisions said they're not coming to save money. Cessna and Gulfstream chose instead to staff the Geneva-based EBACE trade event in May, which focuses on corporate jets.

Bloomberg News

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